

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Fishbein and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Barbara Richardson, I am from Sandy Hook. I am a private citizen, testifying in favor of HB-6355, An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders.

I am a mom, a former ICU RN familiar with what bullets do to bodies. I am neighbor of many people impacted by the 2012 Sandy Hook shooting. My beloved brother, with a history of mental illness and suicidal thoughts, is alive today only, I believe, because his plan to obtain a gun was prevented and he subsequently got the help he needed.

Because there are often warning signs preceding violent or suicidal behavior this last-resort temporary removal measure with due process protections is an effective tool for reducing gun violence. Because firearm suicide accounts for up to two-thirds of gun deaths and is the second leading cause of suicide in Connecticut, there is an urgent need to strengthen our ERPO law to help it save more lives.

A key part of the proposed bill allows a risk protection order to prohibit an individual from buying a firearm if that individual is at risk of imminent harm to self or others and has shown an interest or intent to acquire a firearm, even if he/she doesn't currently possess one. Currently, ERPOs can only be issued against someone who is currently in possession of a gun.

I ask that you favorably report HB-6355 out of committee so that the General Assembly can vote to strengthen our Extreme Risk Protection law so that it works harder to prevent firearm suicide and homicide.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Richardson  
Sandy Hook, CT